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SATURDAY
JULY 11, 1953

John Hughes came to the house at ten o'clock this morning and we talked over various matters affecting his responsibilities, before leaving for SHAPE to witness the ceremonies attendant on the turnover from General Ridgeway to Al Gruenther as the new Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). It was a colorful ceremony and both Generals made speeches to the effect that the Soviet capability of aggression against Western Europe had no whit abated, and ~~that~~ it behooved the NATO partners to press forward briskly with their rearmament. Afterwards there was a reception with cocktails, whiskey and sweetmeats, where we bid hail to Gruenther and farewell to Ridgeway. John dropped me at the Lanterne.

Avis Bohlen, little Avis and Charlie Bohlen, Jane and Bob Joyce, Bill and Royal Tyler, Sasha and David and ourselves had lunch, enlivened amongst other beverages with a magnum of Veuve Clicquot Rosé champagne 1934. Chip was to have been with us but he was recalled to Washington last night in connection with Beria's downfall. That event, announced the day before yesterday, has occasioned many mental convulsions in the Western press. Important though it is, I cannot think it is the final act in the present struggle for power within the Kremlin. Other pretenders to Stalin's succession may be knocked off, and personally, although knowing nothing about Soviet politics, I cannot help wondering whether an aspirant from the army may not make a play.

E., David and I, and naturally the boys, spent the night at Versailles.

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